

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

## **LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-7 (cancelled).

8. (New) A method for operating an internal combustion engine, comprising:

moving a valve needle of a fuel injector from a closing position via an intermediate position to an opening position and back using a piezoelectric actuator to which a trigger signal is applied; and

forming the trigger signal with a greater slope steepness during a transition of the valve needle from the closing position to the intermediate position than during a transition of the valve needle from the intermediate position to the opening position.

9. (New) The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the trigger signal is formed to have a greater slope steepness during the transition of the valve needle from the opening position to the intermediate position than during the transition of the valve needle from the intermediate position to the closing position.

10. (New) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the trigger signal, during the transition of the valve needle from the opening position to the closing position, is symmetrical to the trigger signal during the transition of the valve needle from the closing position to the opening position.

11. (New) A memory device storing computer program for a control device of an internal combustion engine, the computer program, when executed by the control device, causing the control device to perform the steps of:

moving a valve needle of a fuel injector from a closing position via an intermediate position to an opening position and back using a piezoelectric actuator to which a trigger signal is applied; and

forming the trigger signal with a greater slope steepness during a transition of the valve needle from the closing position to the intermediate position than during a transition of the valve needle from the intermediate position to the opening position.

12. (New) The memory device as recited in claim 11, wherein the memory device is an electric memory medium.

13. (New) The memory device according to claim 12, wherein the electric memory medium is a flash medium.

14. (New) The memory device according to claim 12, wherein the electric memory medium is a read-only memory.

15. (New) A control device for an internal combustion engine, comprising:

an arrangement configured to move a valve needle of a fuel injector from a closing position via an intermediate position to an opening position and back using a piezoelectric actuator to which a trigger signal is applied; and

an arrangement configured to form the trigger signal, the trigger signal having a greater slope steepness during a transition of the valve needle from the closing position than during a transition of the valve needle from the intermediate position to the opening position.

16. (New) The control device as recited in claim 15, wherein the trigger signal has a greater slope steepness during the transition of the valve needle from the opening position to the intermediate position than during the transition of the valve needle from the intermediate position to the closing position.